



Chambers's Journal

SIXTH SERIES.

'MADE IN JAPAN.'

THE wonderful trade advances that have been made by Japan since the conclusion of the war with China should make our manufacturers and merchants keep their eyes open, or they may find some morning their occupation gone in markets they thought they had secured. This enterprising people has in the past two years almost secured a monopoly in the Eastern markets of the match-trade. Some twenty or twenty-five years ago the import of matches in India and Burma was largely English and exclusively European. English imports gradually declined, being replaced by Swedish matches. These in their turn are being ousted by the Japanese match, equally good and sold at fifty per cent. lower prices. In Burma, a province which last year imported matches of a value of over five lakhs of rupees, or some £33,000, Japanese matches are almost exclusively used now. They pay an import duty of five per cent., and yet can be purchased retail in the streets of Rangoon at one anna, or about one penny, per bundle of ten boxes. The English match ten or fifteen years ago cost in Rangoon about five times as much, and at that time there was no import duty. Burma is a very damp country, with an annual rainfall varying from 100 to 200 inches. The English match in the rains was difficult to burn. If the box was kept in flannel it would ignite; but the wood of the match was thick and generally damp, and failed to keep alight. The Swedes first, and afterwards the Japanese, saw what was required, and made a thinner match, thus using less wood, and meeting the requirements of a province with a moist climate. Between them they have ousted the British match altogether; and a trade in this single Eastern province alone of a yearly value between £30,000 and £40,000, which will probably be doubled when the Rangoon and Mandalay Railway is extended to the borders of China (as it will be before the end of 1899), has been lost to England, probably never to be regained. The loss of the match-trade in India may be a

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small thing to grieve over, but where a single province of that great dependency takes in a year over £30,000 worth, manufacturers' profits must be something tangible over the whole area. In Burma and the surrounding countries nearly every man, woman, and child smokes, and matches are now to be found in the remotest Burman, Shan, and Karen hamlets hundreds of miles from the coast or railway communication. No jungle man or woman fails to provide himself or herself with a box of matches when they are so cheap. Their forefathers either borrowed a light from a fireplace in a neighbouring hut or procured fire by rubbing briskly two pieces of dried bamboo together, with some dried bamboo shavings—a process the writer, when foresting twenty years ago, often saw applied at an encampment on a wet night before supplies had been brought up by elephants, or when, as was often the case, the thick English match of that period was too damp to strike successfully.

Umbrellas, which were largely manufactured locally of oiled paper, are being supplanted also by Japanese articles, excellent copies of the European umbrella; and these are sold in the Rangoon bazaars at one rupee and four annas each, or about one shilling and eightpence. Similar umbrellas, before Japan took to manufacturing them, cost at least four times the price in Burma, and in this article, as in matches, no European country apparently can hope to compete with the Japanese in producing an equally good-looking and low-priced umbrella. The Burmans are largely taking to the imported umbrella, whilst their own paper umbrellas are often patronised by Europeans as a good protection against sun and rain; although they are not so convenient to carry unopened as the ordinary umbrella, as they are too bulky when closed to be used as a walking-stick. The local article can be bought for eight annas, or about eightpence, and if carefully used lasts for one rainy season.

Bicycles and sewing machines of Japanese make at half European and American prices have also

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been imported into Burma from the Straits. Doubtless before long we shall have Japanese merchants, and possibly a Japanese bank, established in Rangoon. Several cargoes of rice have already been sent from the Burman rice ports to Japan; and that astute people will doubtless soon realise that the best way to push their manufactures and the cheapest way to buy their rice cargoes is to have Japanese firms established at the rising capital of Rangoon, where there will soon be railway communication to the confines of China itself, with its hard-working millions of population. Japanese clocks are now sold throughout the East; and Japanese coals are highly thought of in Bombay.

Whilst Englishmen offer equal advantages to every nationality in trade with the East, it is not a pleasant sight for Englishmen to see British trade passing away into the hands of the foreigner resident in British possessions.

'A fair field and no favour' is a good motto, and one that in trade in British dependencies we have always endeavoured to carry out. If Japan can undersell us and make equally good articles, we cannot hope to persuade the consumer to buy English articles because they are English. An opposite policy has not proved such a success in Saigon and French Cochin China that we should ever think of or wish to imitate it. The British manufacturer may rest assured it is more

difficult to regain a lost trade than to keep an existing one. By having trustworthy agents on the spot, and by altering his manufactures where they do not meet the wishes and wants of his customers; by being obliging and courteous, in fact; and by having his goods always up to sample, he may hope, even in these days of keen competition, to do a good trade. But he must not lose sight of the fact that times have altered a great deal in the last quarter of a century, and that he has many competitors now where formerly he enjoyed almost a monopoly. Under such circumstances, if he wishes to keep and extend his trade in the East, he must prove that he can, like his competitors, adapt himself to circumstances, and not expect his Eastern customers to alter their habits and customs to suit him. In short, the best manufactures will win the most markets, and best includes goodness of the article as well as economy in price. We have a good many brisk competitors in Germany, Belgium, and other European countries, not to speak of the Americans, all quite alive to the exigencies of the hour. But probably in the next quarter of a century we shall find articles 'Made in Japan' imported all over the East to a much greater extent than they are now; and it is to be hoped that we shall not have them (as in the match-trade) eclipsing British manufactures.

JOHN BURNET OF BARNs.

CHAPTER XIII.—OUR ADVENTURE ON THE ALPHEN ROAD.

WE rode in silence for maybe half-a-mile, while I turned over the events of the evening in my mind and tried to find some way out of the difficulties in which by my own folly I found myself placed.

Nicol looked steadfastly before him and said never a word. By-and-by I found the desire for some one to speak with so overpowering that I up and asked him if he had heard aught of the events of the evening.

'Ay, sir,' said he. 'I heard ye had some kind o' stramash, but that was a'. I trust ye're weel oot o't.'

'Have you heard of my cousin Gilbert?' I asked.

'The Wastland lad wha used to come aboot the Barns? Oh ay! I've heard o' him.'

'I flung a glass at his face to-night,' said I.

'I hope, sir, that he flung anither at yoursel!' he said anxiously.

'No. He swallowed the insult and left soon after. He is not the man to let me off so easily.'

'Whew,' said Nicol, 'but that's bad. Wad ye mind, laird, if I rode on afore ye?'

'Why?' I asked.

'Cousins and sodger-folk are kittle cattle,' says he. 'I wadna wonder noo but that Maister Gilbert were ahint a dyke. I've heard tell o' some o' his pliskies in his ain land, and he's no' the lad to let a midge stick in his throat.'

I drew up my horse angrily.

'Nicol,' I cried, 'you are intolerable. My cousin is a gentleman of birth, and do you think he is the man to kill from a dykeside? Fie on you! you have the notions of a common roost-robber.'

'Weel away then, laird,' cries he. 'So be it; but I've little faith in your Gilberts for a' their gentrice. I ken their breed ower weel. But I maun ride afore ye, for there are some gey rough bits on the road, and I'm a wee bit mair sure in the saddle than yoursel', wi' a' respect to your lairdship.'

So the wilful fellow must needs ride before me, looking sharply to the right and left as though we were in far Muscovy instead of peaceful Holland.

As for me, I felt in no humour to listen to my servant's tales or do aught than think dolefully on my own matters. The sight of my

cousin and of Mistress Kate had made me sore sick for home, and I could have found it in my heart once and again to take ship at the next sailing for Leith. But these thoughts I choked down, for I felt that they were unbecoming to any man. Yet I longed for Marjory as never lover longed for his mistress. Her bright hair was ever before my sight, and her last words on that February evening rang always in my head. I prayed to God to watch over her as I rode through the stiff poplars on the way to Leyden.

As for my quarrel, I cared not a straw for Gilbert and his ill-will, it having never been my nature to be timorous toward men. Nay, I looked forward to meeting him with no little pleasure, for it had long been an open question which of the twain was best at the sword-play.

'Maister John,' said Nicol, suddenly turning round, 'I saw twae men creepin' roond thae scrunts o' trees. I wis they maunna be after any ill.' We were by this time nearing a black, inhospitable part of the land, where the road ran across a moor all covered with ferns and rushes and old trunks of trees.

'Ride on,' said I; 'if we turned for every man that crosses the path we should never leave our own threshold.'

He did as he was ordered, and our horses being put to the canter, covered the ground gallantly, and our spur-chains clinked in the silent night.

Suddenly, to my amazement, I saw Nicol fling himself back in the saddle while his horse stumbled violently forward. It was one of the most ingenious feats of horsemanship that I have ever witnessed. The beast stood quivering, his ears erect with fright, while I rode alongside.

'For God's sake, sir, take care,' Nicol cried. 'There's something ower the road, and if I hadna been on the watch it wad hae been a' ower wi' ae guid man. Watch, for ye may get a shot in your belly ony meenute.'

Now, as it chanced it was that lively canter which saved us, for the rogues who had set the trap had retired a good way, not expecting us so early. At the sound of the stumble they came rushing up from among the fern; and ere I knew, a pistol-shot cracked past my ears, and another and another.

Two went wide, one hit my horse on the ear and made him unmanageable, so that I stood there with my beast plunging and kicking, at the mercy of whosoever had a fourth pistol.

Nicol spoke not a word, but turning his horse, dashed forward in the direction whence the shots had come. As it fell out, it was the best thing that any one could have done; for the robber, not expecting any such assault, was preparing to fire again. As it was, the fore-feet of the horse took one villain on the chest, knocking him senseless, and well-nigh trampling the life out of him. A

second gripped him by the sleeve, and attempted to drag him from the saddle, which plan would doubtless have succeeded had not my servant, pulling the pistol (which was not loaded) from his holster, presented it at the man's head with such effect that the fellow in fear of his life let go and fled across the moor.

By this time I had reduced my own animal to something like submission. I rode after Nicol, and came up just in time to see the third man of the band (there were but three; for, doubtless, they trusted to their trap for unhorsing if not stunning us) engaged in a desperate struggle. Nicol had him by the throat with one hand, and was endeavouring to squeeze the breath out of him, while he in turn had his opponent by the other arm, which he was twisting cruelly. Had my servant been on foot the matter would soon have ended, for the throat fared badly which those long, wiry hands once encircled; but being on horseback he dared not lean forward lest he should lose his seat. My appearance settled it; for the robber, freeing himself, at one desperate leap made off at the top of his speed, leaving his pistols behind him. There remained but the man whom Nicol's horse had deprived of his senses.

Fortunately the blow had not been a very severe one, for he was not long in coming to himself. There was some water in a little stagnant pool near at hand which Nicol dashed in his face, and in a little the man opened his eyes and looked up.

At the sight of us he started, and the events of the past half-hour came back to his memory. Then a look of sullen, obstinate anger came into his face, and he lay still, waiting for events to take their course.

'Who are you?' I asked.

He made no answer.

I repeated the question several times, and still the man kept his silence.

'Ye donnert seondrel,' cried Nicol, 'tell us whae ye are, or ye'll hang the morn on the Gallows-hill at Leyden.'

Still the fellow would not speak.

'Let's tie him up,' said Nicol, 'and I'll ride wi' him on the horse afore me. He'll get justice when we win to the toun.'

But this was not my policy. I had other things to think of than bringing marauders to trial. A sudden thought struck me.

'I will try him another way,' said I to Nicol. 'Do you stand aside.'

The man lay on the ground where my servant's horse had laid him, with a belt round his legs, and his arms knotted together. I went up to him and stood over.

'Do you know who I am?' I asked sternly in as tragic a voice as I could assume.

The man stared sulkily, but did not speak.

'You fool,' I cried, 'do you think that thus you will circumvent me? Know that I am the

great Doctor Joannes Burnetus of Lugdunum, skilled in all arts of earth and heaven, able to tell divinations and prophecies, learned in all magic and witchery. I know all that thou hast done since thy birth, and thy father and grand-sire before thee, all the wickedness which shall entitle thee to eternal damnation in that place which the devil is even now preparing for thee. Yea, I can tell thee the very death which thou shalt die'—

'Stop, stop,' cries the fellow. 'Oh! most learned sir, spare me. I know thou knowest all things. I confess my sins. And, Oh! I promise you I shall mend my ways. Stop, I pray.'

'There is still one ray of hope for thee,' said I, 'but I cannot give my word that thou shalt ever gain it, for thou hast advanced too far in sin already. But yet thou mayst escape, and there is but one way to set about it—namely, to tell me of all thy wickedness. I adjure thee by the sacred sign *Tekel*, which the Chaldeans used of old; by *Men*, which was the sign of the Egyptians; by the *Eikon* of the Greeks; by the *Lar* of the Romans. I summon thee by the holy names of God—*Tetragrammaton*, *Adonay*, *Algramay*, *Saday*, *Sabaoth*, *Planaboth*, *Panthon*, *Craton*, *Neupmaton*, *Deus*, *Homo*, *Omnipotens*; by *Asmath*, the

name of the Evil One, who is lord over thee and my slave—I summon thee to tell me all thy deeds.'

The man was frightened past all telling. He tried to crawl to my knees, and began a recital of all manner of crimes and peccadilloes, from his boyhood till the present hour. I listened without interest.

'Had any Scot a part with thee in this night's work?' I asked.

'No, there was none. There were but Bol and Delvaux beside myself, both Dutch born and bred.'

My mind was lightened. I never really believed my cousin to have had any part in such a matter, but I was glad to know it for truth.

'You may go now,' I said. 'Go and repent; and may God blast thee with all His fire if thou turnest thy hand to evil again. By-the-by, thy name? I must have it from thy own lips.'

'Jan Hamman, your lordship,' said he.

'Well, God pity thee, Jan Hamman, if ever I lay my hand on thee again. Be off now.'

He was off in a twinkling, running for his very life. Nicol and I remounted and rode onward, coming to Leyden at the hour of one on the Sabbath morning—a thing which I much regretted.

COMPANY PROMOTING.



HE promotion of public companies has of late years attracted an increasing amount of interest, owing partly to the popular notion that therein lies one of the shortest ways to wealth; while its development has been so great that few there are who directly or indirectly are not concerned. The individual proprietor is fast giving way to the board of directors, with its army of officials; the personal element in business is on the decline, and as a consequence employers and employed now meet together under the passionless supervision of the Board of Trade. But it is the object rather of this article to ponder over and to expound a few aspects of company promotion—the rights and the wrongs of it, the opportunities and the justifications for it, and the pitfalls and the snares surrounding it.

The promotion of public companies has furnished a conspicuous object lesson on the proverb 'A fool and his money are soon parted,' and has shown up in a far from pleasant light the avarice that underlies the nature of so many of us; while the enormous growth of negotiable security, the direct result of limited liability, has afforded an opportunity for the greatest legalised gamble the world has ever seen. On the other hand, the public company has produced the Director, than whom, when he is what he should

be—and he often is—there is no finer example of the public servant; it has occasioned the publication of profits, information invaluable to the consumer, that trading with glass pockets so desired by England's greatest prophet; it has brought about in many instances the union of interests of buyer and seller; it has checked hoarding, the gold pieces which formerly rusted in the stocking having paid the wages of the artisan, and stimulated the brains of the patentee to yet further marvellous achievement; in short, the public company has enriched industry an hundredfold, and has infused into property that invaluable quality, negotiability, enabling land and buildings, plant and machinery, stocks and good-wills to pass in the smallest quantities from one end of the country to the other, from one owner's pocket to another, with the ease and facility of sovereigns themselves. Many and many is the financial difficulty, and even ruin, which might with truth be ascribed to this very lack of negotiability; while limited liability has again and again smoothed the thorny path of the executor, and extricated him from the many prolonged and ruinous family quarrels which it seems so often his lot to contend with. In addition to all this, the public company has vastly extended the interest in trade. In a nation of shopkeepers, the retired tradesman has been in effect recalled to his counter; and from Land's

End to John o' Groat's there is neither village nor hamlet but has a stake in some industrial undertaking, whose fortunes are watched with a keenness and interest sufficient in themselves to provide a liberal commercial education.

With such an extended and extending scope of action, it is matter of congratulation to find that the public are gradually yet surely gaining experience in company flotation; but they still apparently have much to learn. They should understand that the flotation of a company is a sale differing but very little from an auction sale: the property is offered in attractively small lots to suit all comers, while the usual spontaneous eloquence of the auctioneer finds vent in the glowing descriptions to be found in the prospectus.

To follow the analogy yet further, the interest and character of an auction sale is largely determined by the name of the vendor, for it often satisfactorily disposes of the pertinent question, Why is the property offered? Similarly, when a public company is launched, Who are the vendors? and why is the property offered? are two points which should not be overlooked. It may be that an established business is to be acquired and extended, or that an amalgamation is to be effected; it may be patent rights or concessions are to be obtained, a scheme of exploration and development undertaken, or contracts to inaugurate a business taken over. Each class of flotation must therefore be criticised from a different point of view. Some are speculations, others investments; and while the intending investor ought to be safeguarded at every point, the speculator is entitled to no sympathy. In the case of the flotation of the established business, there is little difficulty in judging the capitalisation and the purchase consideration: the good-will must not exceed three years' profits, and the tangible assets must bear a proper proportion to the paper or good-will asset; and the working capital must be sufficient. But in this class of flotation the public need to know particularly why the property is offered and what the guarantees are for successful management in the future. In amalgamation schemes, to a great extent the same criticism holds good; but here there is a chance for the promoter to obscure the present actual earnings of the individual businesses, and to effectually exclude from view any weak reasons for disposal, by dangling before the eyes of the investor the enormous prospective profits to accrue from the amalgamation. In the first case, however, the occupation of the company promoter is nearly gone. A discerning public has squeezed him out, and his only chance is either to find a vendor who will sell his business for a sum far below its actual worth—a type of vendor, needless to say, almost as extinct as the dodo—or he must manipulate the figures or so dazzle the public with the glitter of the directorate as to turn

their heads; but fortunately his opportunities in this respect diminish daily. There are times and seasons, however, when the public throws rational criticism to the wind, as in the recent cycle boom; then the promoter reaches down the bad stock from the top shelf, looks out the stale parcels, and sells them by marking them up at double the usual price. In such times the public subscribes its millions in the feverish hope that the morrow may bring into the market a yet more thoughtless plunger; repentance only comes when the bank sends a polite note that the overdraft has considerably exceeded the limit, while at the same time the door of the safe can be with difficulty closed owing to the accumulation of scrip. The established business, in short, must now be floated direct from the owners to the public, for the latter naturally require that the owners shall be willing to take the risk and pay the cost of the flotation; and there is now, as a rule, no room in such cases for a promoter's profit.

It is, however, in the flotation of patent rights and concessions that the Companies Acts seem best to fulfil their mission; and it is here, too, that the company promoter justifies his existence. A word or two might perhaps be introduced at this point on the company promoter himself, but there is an initial difficulty in the way—a difficulty of definition. Every individual who lives by his wits usually describes himself either as a commission agent, an accountant, a general dealer, or a company promoter—the latter probably if his liabilities are large enough—but he thereby maliguns a profession honestly created by an honest demand, without which the public would often miss the development of a valuable addition to the standard of comfort. The promoter family is therefore a large one, and the cousinships therein taper out to many removes; consequently our remarks must be confined to the heads of families only. Of the penniless schemer we desire to say nothing: he rarely brings anything to a successful issue, and whenever he has wriggled himself into a promotion of any value he can usually be bought out for a few pounds. As a matter of fact, nearly the whole of company promotion is now in the hands of company promoting syndicates, and on very many prospectuses the name of this syndicate will be found figuring as the vendor who takes the risk of the promotion. It is on the boards of these company promoting syndicates that the real artist in the profession will be found, and the commercial ability of such men is unquestionably very great. As is usual in professions of which the public are ignorant, a much larger profit is attributed to such bodies than is actually the case. The risks are heavy which they undertake, and the result in ninety-nine times out of a hundred is a profit in shares of the undertaking brought out. To recognise a

patent as not only ingenious but of commercial value, to put down cash for some far-away concession obtained by skill and tact after encountering dangers and perils to life and limb, to experiment with and nurse such, to offer with all the attendant risk and expense these wares to a fickle and uncertain public, is worth surely some substantial recompense; and provided that a prospectus truthfully sets out the salient features of such a patent or concession offered, the public has no right to squirm if the venture does not turn out a goldmine. With such companies the investor should have nothing to do. In fact he should keep religiously clear of the promoted company altogether. There are plenty of sound industrials floated direct, without intermediate profit, where the good-wills are reasonable and the board efficient, and where the dividend is not likely to drop below six per cent. Let the investor stick to these and leave the promoted company of patents and concessions to the speculator. At present it is to be feared the public has made no distinction between the one sort of company and the other, and possibly, having been bitten in some harebrained scheme, refuses to invest money in anything registered under the Limited Liability Acts.

Not only, however, is there in company promotion a danger to the investing public, but also to the proprietor of a business who is approached by an unprincipled promoter. Specious statements are made as to the amount of cash that will be paid as purchase consideration, and on these statements free options of purchase are given, the business—or amalgamation—is offered, profits published, and in the end the original vendor is told that he must, if he wishes the flotation to be a success, take nearly all his purchase consideration in shares instead of cash—shares perhaps in a large amalgamated concern the destinies of which he is unable to control. But *experientia docet*, and there are evident signs on all hands that the business of company promoting is narrowing down into reasonable limits, where the profit earned is commensurate with ability displayed

and risk undertaken; and it will be cause for hearty congratulation when the Limited Liability Acts have even freer play and wider scope, provided that the opportunities of bogus and dangerous promotions are further hedged; and to be more effective should emanate rather from a discerning public than from Blue Book regulations, which can usually be evaded.

When the flotation of public companies is better understood, when the investor's company has been clearly differentiated from that of the speculator, it is more than probable that a large proportion of trust money will eventually find its way into sound industrials, and this for many reasons. Thus, the competition for trust investments is becoming most inconveniently severe, the result being an accumulation in money on deposit at the banks, which spells poverty to many beneficiaries dependent for a living on the interest of a small capital sum. Gilt-edged securities have been driven up to a prohibitive price, mortgages at trustee valuations are snapped up in a moment, while at the same time there are trading companies yielding with no risk five and six per cent. It is a growing custom to bequeath money in trust, and while little latitude can be given to trustees already in possession of their trusts, the innovation will probably come in the way of special permit to trustees to invest in certain companies complying with certain conditions, possibly as to proportion of reserve fund to capital, dividends paid during past five or ten years, or some similar provisos; it may be, in fact, that shares in public companies may come to be subject to valuation in a similar way to properties, and that trustees will be empowered to invest in mortgage debentures, possibly even shares, of such companies where the margin of security is approved of. One thing is quite clear, the development of the public company will eventually be synonymous with the development of commercial undertakings, and when such an end is achieved trust money cannot afford to lie outside of such wide-reaching and interest-bearing securities.

L I N D A.

CHAPTER II.—ON THE WAY TO THE GOLDFIELDS.



T Juneau the *Flaming Occident* had landed her passengers for what was then known as the Alaska gold-fields. Thence, by water, they had travelled to Dyea; camped at the foot of the terrible Chilkoot Pass, waiting for a whole week, amidst driving, icy clouds of sleet and whizzing showers of snow, for the weather to clear. And when the weather did clear, and the awful precipitous wall of snow

and ice loomed distinct and forbidding, towering high above them, the adventurers fell back in dismay. However, the difficulty had got to be faced, and Jim and Twilight Ben were among the first half-dozen who hazarded the arduous undertaking. With the assistance of a party of Tagish Indians, the tents and baggage were packed to the summit over a trail of steps cut in the icy steep with the axes of the adventurers themselves. Often a single false step would have been fatal;

but the false step did not happen. Once the summit was gained, the baggage was packed down the long ten-mile descent to Lake Lindermann; and, after long days of wearying toil and terrible suffering, the perils of the uppermost lakes were safely passed, the dangers of the White Horse Rapids left behind, and, three miles below, the raft on which the hardy argonauts had transported themselves and their baggage for the last fifty miles was poled to the side at the head of the White Horse for disembarkation.

There is a spot in Yorkshire that must be very familiar to many readers of this story, for poets have sung of it and painters have limned its romantic beauties for generations—the 'Strid,' at Bolton Woods. Here the river Wharfe gathers its wide, rapid waters together to hurl them in one swift, seething torrent through a narrow cleft in the solid rock scarce four feet wide. The White Horse, on the Lewes River, is a magnified 'Strid' on a stupendous scale. It is a chute through a deep gorge of some forty yards only in width—a 'box cañon'—and yet along that pent-up channel leap, with one long, frenzied bound, the concentrated forces of a river which is six hundred feet across immediately above the cañon. A few foolhardy dare-devils have attempted the passage of this awful spot, but only one or two have lived to tell the tale of their idiotic exploits. Although the gorge is but a hundred yards or so long, even an empty raft sent through is usually torn to pieces, and the travellers, after packing their outfit overland for this short stage, have to build another raft or boat below to carry them on their farther voyage.

It was at the very head of this chute, where the current begins to run strong, and the wide waters gather for their maddening plunge, that the raft was moored to the bank by a single rope. The whole of the baggage had been transferred to *terra firma*, and most of the little handful of prospectors had landed. The only man left upon the raft was Jim Vickerson, and, just as he was about to follow, a loud crack was heard. The rope had snapped, and with the sudden jerk Jim slipped, fell, and, striking his head against a projecting log at the end of the raft, tumbled senseless into the icy waters of the river.

Blind to the peril of the situation, and filled only with thoughts of a similar nature to those which would occur to a farmer on seeing his only useful horse in imminent danger of slipping its hip or breaking its leg just at the beginning of harvesting, Twilight Ben, with a savage oath, sprang back on to the gently-receding raft, and as Jim's unconscious body rose, grabbed it wildly by the collar, and attempted to drag him on board. But Jim was big, heavy, and unwieldy; it required all the old miner's strength and some moments of precious time to pull his helpless burden into safety on the logs; and when, having

done so, he turned to the shore, the full terrors of their position swept appallingly across his brain. For already the raft was in the tow of the swiftening current, and had drifted a score of yards away from the bank, where his awe-struck companions stood, spell-bound with horror, rooted to the spot. All escape was cut off. Even a strong swimmer could never have reached shore across that swiftly-flowing stream, and Twilight Ben was no swimmer. In his fury his first mad, vengeful impulse was to pick up the inert body of the unhappy cause of the mishap, and hurl it to certain destruction in the gathering stream. Fortunately for the unconscious man, discretion came to the grizzled rascal. There was just a chance of running the chute successfully, and in that case one live Jim would be worth more to him than a hundred dead ones. It was all the work of a second or two. In a trice he had snatched the broken piece of rope that was still attached to the rude craft, passed it twice round Jim's body as he lay right in the centre of the mass of floating lumber, and once round a log of the raft. Then, throwing himself across the prostrate figure, he whipped the rope round his own waist, hitched it round another log, and twisted the end tightly round his wrist. In this position, with one leg firmly bent round a stanchion, he put every ounce of his strength into one mighty effort to hold on for dear life; and the next instant, whirling, plunging, tossing, they disappeared from the terrified gaze of their fellow travellers, and were swept into the jaws of the watery hell.

The lumber of which the raft was built groaned and shivered under the terrific strain of the furious race; the frowning bluffs to right and left flew past in one confusing, hurried blur; and yet the grim old miner kept his steely grip and held on. Tilted this way and that, the sport and plaything of the frantic torrent, the raft shot the first half of that fearsome death-trap in comparative safety; but at this point a huge swirl in the current caught the frail craft in its resistless power, and, flinging it like a chip, caused it to impinge with a thrilling shock against the nearest bluff. For one brief fraction of a second it paused, quivering from the impact, but it held together; and, though his toes were ground cruelly between a couple of logs, and the rope chafed deep into the raw flesh of his straining wrists, Twilight Ben still hung on and never relaxed his grip. Then, with a sickening whirl, the overpowering flood dashed the raft along its headlong course. With lightning speed it slid down the watery incline and plunged beneath the horrific chaos of wild waters. Raft and crew disappeared beneath the raging conflict. In the darkness of immersion, the thundering surge sang wildly in Twilight Ben's ears. A thousand demons of the angry flood were dragging remorselessly in every direction. The icy waters chilled his marrow. Still,

with aching muscles, he kept his grip; and, when that agonising moment had passed, and the raft, which had happily remained right-side uppermost, once more returned to the surface, the blood was spurting from his eyes, ears, and nose as the cost of his effort. Even then he did not realise that the chute was run, and they had passed out from under the shadow of an awful death. Borne on the quieter waters below, the raft at last caught a big snag, and was floated quietly into a side eddy. Here the other miners, who had hurried from above on foot, found them, and still Twilight Ben, with catlike tenacity, was clinging with unrelaxed grip to the craft, for, numbed and paralysed, he could not leave go his hold. Willing hands lifted them ashore and forced brandy between their teeth.

'I guess I'm a mighty pore hand at fixing up my thoughts into words,' began Jim in a quavering voice some hours later, after he had regained his wits and had learned the facts of his marvellous escape; 'but I ain't ongrateful—I ain't ongrateful. I owe my life to you—to you'—

'I calkerlate I ain't no more'n a ornery cuss at chin-music myself,' responded Twilight Ben, with a face and tone as emotionless as a Hindu god's; 'but you're on it this time, pard—right on it.'

'Yas,' Jim went on in queer little jerks, as the corners of his mouth twitched with the intensity of feeling his tongue could not relieve; 'you've saved my life at the risk of yo'r own—me, a stranger, and you risked an awful death fur me! Gosh! What did you do it fur? I dunno how to thank you, but little 'Linda will—ay, and the Lord will too; for "insomuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these"'

'Cheese it, pard,' interrupted the other, 'I don't quite catch on to them high-toned notions. I calkerlate I jest did my level best to fish you out 'cos I couldn't afford to see you pass in yo'r chips—lestways not jest yet,' he chuckled to himself. 'Durn my pesky old hide, ef the young jay don't take me fur a phil-anther-feest! Ez ef I'd ha' been sech a lop-eared idjet ez to risk one j'int of my little finger fur his hull carcass, ef I'd ha' knowed it! Anyhow, I calkerlate it suits the lay I'm on, and I ain't agoin' to throw up the keerds when luck deals me a good hand—skursely!'

It pained Honest Jim to hear the old reprobate's irreverence, and yet, at the same time, his apparent modesty roused his admiration to an enthusiastic pitch.

'Couldn't afford to lose me!' he gasped, seizing Twilight Ben's hand in his fervent grip. 'And I've done nuthin' fur you—jest nuthin'—'cept put you to a power of trouble to help me git my hoofs toughened, ez you say. It's ontrue—ontrue! You jest say *that* outer yo'r good-nature. It's me w'ot can't afford to lose you!'

Poor, deluded, honest Jim! The savagery of Twilight Ben's outward man was lost upon him, and through it he saw only beneath the outward ugly mask a wealth of rugged nobleness and generous heroism, where, in reality, there lurked nothing but incredible meanness and foul treachery.

With some repairs the raft was made to do duty again, and carried the little band of adventurous voyagers some eighty miles farther on their perilous journey. At the foot of Lake Le Barge, having already travelled nearly three hundred miles from Juneau, they made a camp and commenced boat-building operations. What with collecting the lumber for this purpose, squaring the logs, sawing them into boards, building and caulking the craft, nearly a fortnight was spent here; and then, safely shooting the Five Fingers and Reef Rapids, the party, without any further serious mishap, floated down to Fort Cudahy, on the Forty Mile Creek, the then centre of the mining operations.

By this time the Western Wolf had so far gained the ascendancy over the Kansas Lamb that it required no persuasion to prevail upon Jim to throw in his lot with the old miner, and work a claim in partnership. Very little time was spent in prospecting, and within a fortnight of reaching Fort Cudahy, the ill-assorted pair had staked out their claim on the Forty Mile, pitched their tent, and were hard at work. At first they employed hired help; but the price of labour was high, and the pay-dirt yielded next to nothing. Outside help had to be abandoned, and the owners of the claim slaved on alone, wearied with incessant toil and worried by mosquitoes. Above and below them, luckier men were taking out from thirty to sixty dollars a day, while, now and again, they chanced upon a day that was marked with a good-sized nugget. As for Jim and his chum, ill-fortune persistently stuck to them. More often than not the gravel they dug was not worth panning out, and their best day—when they struck a tiny pocket of coarse gold—yielded only twenty dollars. The strain of expectation unsatisfied, of invariable disappointment, coupled with the bitter hardships of unaccustomed privations, told severely on the young Kansas farmer; and, day by day, one brick after another toppled down from the airy castle he had fondly built, until the ruins encumbered his brain; and over and among those ruins, in the nightmare that haunted him the moment he closed his eyes for a few hours in his hammock, he chased 'Linda—little 'Linda—while heavy weights clogged his feet, and every moment, despite his desperate efforts to overtake her, she sped farther and farther from him. Then he would wake with the cold sweat of anguished fear upon him, and return to his heavy toil unrefreshed and despondent.

Twilight Ben regarded the discouraging state of

things more serenely. The hot blood of love did not gallop scorching through his veins. For him there was no memory of a waiting dainty little school-marm to goad on the fiery fever. True, though, he was working for the attainment of his earthly elysium—a paradise of unlimited cut-throat euchre and draw-poker, filled in with the soul-soothing anticipation of being put to bed every night as full of whisky as he could comfortably hold. Moreover, in one sense his disappointment was really twice that of Jim's; for, while the latter only calculated on one moiety of the products of their labour as his share, Twilight Ben reckoned the whole of the joint earnings as his. And so he slaved doggedly on.

By-and-by came rumours that rich pay-dirt had been struck on Glacier Creek, on the Sixty Mile River, prospects showing a dollar, and sometimes more, to the pan. Along with some other miners on the Forty Mile, Jim caught the new infection, and would have left for the latest reported Colchos; but Twilight Ben, with a discretion begotten of riper years and former experiences of rushes, held him back.

'Say, parl,' he observed, 'don't you be in sech a pesky blamed hurry to bulge over to Sixty Mile till we've wrestled with this yer claim some more. Luck runs durned streaky, and I reckon thet's jest how the gold lies on these yer bars, this yer being a bed-rock creek. Thar's been pockets found above and below on jest sech prospects ez we got, and thar's pockets right here—somewhar—I'm tarnation shore. So, we've jest got to hump ourselves and go in bald-headed, and you bet yer gum-boots we'll tumble right on 'em *ker-slap*.'

For a while this cheering assurance had an encouraging effect upon the younger man; but his malady—for malady this terrible depression of spirits truly was—merely relaxed its grip a little, while it still kept its fingers upon him.

Then came September, and with its coming the thermometer suddenly dropped. A log hut was hastily built and well banked. The Ice King breathed upon the land, and the waters of the rivers became chained in their channels; snow covered those trackless desolate wilds; the Northern Lights flamed in the heavens, and the dark, silent terrors of the arctic winter, with its

wearying succession of dawnless days, fell upon the earth. For lack of water no dirt could now be washed, and all that could be done was by means of thawing the gravel with fires and drifting, to dig out the pay-dirt and throw it up into a pile ready for washing as soon as the return of summer opened the rivers.

The rigours of that awful eight-months winter were hard enough to be borne; yet a thousand times worse was the horrible doubt—the racking uncertainty—as to whether they were 'shovelling-in' rich pay-dirt or helplessly wasting their strength for nought, by throwing away the desperate labour of two-thirds of a whole year in digging out gravel that would not even pay for the washing. With his ever-haunting fear upon him, the fever of his curious sickness burned within Jim with redoubled vigour, and it was only his exceptional constitution and sheer doggedness that bore him through the dark ordeal, until the sun shone once more upon their icy prison, and released the waters of the Forty Mile Creek.

Gaunt and haggard, like the ghost of his former self, he mechanically set to work with Twilight Ben to wash the accumulated pile of pay-dirt. *Pay-dirt*? It was nothing but a bitter mockery to call it that, so poorly did it pan out. Yet the miserable yield did not come as a shock to Jim, for he had dejectedly persuaded himself long before that failure was certain; only it deepened his gloom a little. After working almost incessantly for three weeks at the sluice-box, the gold-dust buried in a tomato-tin under one corner of the hut amounted to no more than five hundred dollars, or about half the amount of their original outlay in travelling expenses, outfits, and provisions. Pining for a sight of the little school-marm at Oloville, and sick at heart, Jim flung down pick and shovel.

'I jest can't stand this any longer. I'm going to quit,' he remarked dejectedly. 'I reckon there's enough of my share of the dust to git me back to Kansas.'

Twilight Ben made no audible response, but murmured to himself, 'Which this yer move don't quite suit my game, and I calkerlate I've jest got to chip in and to trump this yer young galoot's trick afore he spiles my hand.'

CONCERNING CHEMISTS.

DOES the profession of chemist offer many attractions to our youth? we have often been asked; and because we are of opinion that it does we think it worth while to call their present attention to it. What may be the net income of a fairly prosperous pharmaceutical chemist we have no means of knowing;

but we are inclined to think that it is most substantial, despite the fact that a 'drug in the market' has become proverbial in its expression. As to the salaries drawn by analytical and consulting chemists we could speak more definitely if we considered it necessary. Suffice it to say that they are most liberal—and, accordingly, most desirable. But apart from monetary rewards

and considerations, the profession of chemist offers many attractions. Chemistry is in itself a most interesting and valuable study; its devotees are continually meeting some new and fascinating problem, and the possibilities lying before them are endless. Every day seems, indeed, to bring forth some new discovery.

The science has made great advances since the days when the alchemists strove to transmute other metals into gold and vainly searched to discover the elixir of life. 'The world was young then,' we say; but we know that the philosopher's stone has not yet been discovered! Alchemy, or alchymy, we may regard as the infant stage of chemistry, just as astrology was that of astronomy. A 'druggist' was originally one who dealt in dried roots or herbs, and vegetable substances still hold an important place in the manufacture of drugs, so that the name is even at the present day a truly correct and expressive one; and 'druggist' is also the name most commonly used when reference is made verbally to a dispenser of potions and poisons.

Now, any person may set up in business as a shoemaker or grocer, but it is not every one who can open shop and call himself a chemist and druggist. In fact, the profession of pharmacy is a most distinct and responsible one; and in order to qualify for the fulfilment of its duties a youth has to pass a series of hard examinations. The law upon the matter is very rigid, and we naturally agree that, in the public interest, it should be so. Many who have given attention to the question claim that it ought to be even more severe than it is, and that no one should be allowed to commence business on his own account unless he is qualified as a 'pharmaceutical chemist' and not merely registered as a 'chemist and druggist.' But this is purely matter of opinion, into the discussion of which we shall not enter. Yet we venture to counsel every boy—and every girl, for why should not girls become dispensing chemists?—who may have resolved to enter this profession to make up his mind to work for the higher diploma, and not to stop short at the lower. Where means and opportunity offer, there is nothing to hinder the aspirant from qualifying as an analytical and consulting chemist; indeed, we know cases where this has been done.

Before accompanying the apprentice chemist through his examinations we shall glance briefly at the constitution and powers of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. This was established in 1841 for the purpose of advancing chemistry and pharmacy, and for promoting a uniform system of education of those who should carry on the business of a chemist and druggist. Two years later the society was incorporated by royal charter, and its powers were extended and confirmed by the Pharmacy Act of 1852. This act established a distinction between qualified

and unqualified persons, but did not otherwise interfere with the sale of drugs or with the dispensing of prescriptions. The society was empowered to appoint examiners, from whom all future candidates were to obtain their certificates of qualification prior to registration. The register is printed and published annually.

So matters rested until the year 1868, when the law once more stepped in. We may quote from the Pharmacy Act of 1868: 'It shall be unlawful,' it says, 'for any person to sell or keep open shop for retailing, dispensing, or compounding poisons, or to assume or use the title "chemist and druggist," or chemist, or druggist, or pharmacist, or dispensing chemist or druggist, in any part of Great Britain, unless such person shall be a pharmaceutical chemist or a chemist and druggist within the meaning of this act, and be registered under this act.' Thus a new class of persons was recognised and placed upon the register as 'chemists and druggists'; the 'pharmaceutical chemist' is registered under the act of 1852. The act was amended in 1869, and all legally qualified medical practitioners and members of the Royal Veterinary College, registered as such, were exempted from the restrictions imposed in regard to the dispensing of medicines.

The powers of the society do not extend to Ireland. In 1791 the Apothecaries' Hall was established in Dublin by act of parliament, and all apothecaries were examined as to their qualifications by the directors of this institution. An act to regulate the sale of poisons in Ireland was passed in 1870, and five years later a Pharmacy Act established and incorporated the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, induing it with powers similar to those of the sister society of Great Britain. This act of 1875 was considerably amended in 1890; and, everything considered, all three kingdoms may be regarded as on an equal footing in respect of the qualifications and registration of their chemists and druggists.

It is distinctly advisable for a boy to obtain a pass in the first or general knowledge examination before being apprenticed. The subjects prescribed are: (1) Latin: grammar, translation from *Cæsar's Gallic War*, Book I.; or from *Virgil's Æneid*, Book I., and easy retranslation; (2) arithmetic: numeration, simple rules, fractions, proportion, percentages and stocks, and the metric system; (3) English: grammar and composition, with special attention to spelling and handwriting. The fee is two guineas, and the examination is held four times a year, on the second Tuesdays in January, April, July, and October. There are five centres in Scotland (six in July) and thirty-one in England (thirty-four in July). The tests set are very thorough, and the marking of the examiners is severe. We consider it advisable to state this because very many are misled by the simplicity and narrow range of the subjects prescribed. The board of examiners

are empowered to accept in lieu of this examination a certificate of having passed in Latin, English, and arithmetic at the junior or senior local or at the matriculation or degree examinations of any of our universities. All three subjects must have been passed at one examination. Successful candidates may be elected 'students' of the society on payment of an annual subscription of half-a-guinea. This entitles them to be supplied free of charge with the society's *Journal*, besides giving them other privileges.

The other examinations held by the society are the minor, which qualifies for registration as a 'chemist and druggist,' and the major, which qualifies for registration as a 'pharmaceutical chemist.' These are both in writing and orally, and are held in London and in Edinburgh four times a year. Before entering the minor the student must have attained the full age of twenty-one years. At the same time he must produce a certified declaration that for three years he has been registered as having passed the first examination, and has been employed as an apprentice or student, or has otherwise for three years been practically engaged in the translation and dispensing of prescriptions. The subjects of examination are: chemistry and physics, botany, materia medica, pharmacy, practical dispensing, and prescriptions. The council recommends that all candidates before presenting themselves for examination should receive a systematic course of instruction occupying a period of not less than six months; and that such period of study should include at least sixty lectures in chemistry, eighteen hours' work in each week in practical chemistry, forty-five lectures and demonstrations in botany, and twenty-five lectures and demonstrations in materia medica. These figures represent the minimum courses recommended; indeed, it is much more than a mere recommendation, for no student need expect to obtain a pass without undergoing such training. The examination fee is five guineas, and successful candidates may become 'Associates' of the society.

Those who pass the major examination may become 'Members,' and as such are entitled to a seat in the council or on the board of examiners. The fee here charged is three guineas, and an annual subscription of a guinea is required from Members. The subjects of examination are the same as those for the minor, but necessarily much more advanced.

Regarding apprenticeship, the usual term is five years. During this time the apprentice will receive merely nominal wages, and it should be his own outlook to get under a good master, who will, of course, assist him and direct his studies for the minor and major examinations. The cost of six months' special training would run from fifteen pounds at private classes in Edinburgh, to, say, thirty pounds at the society's School of Pharmacy in London. This school is very efficiently

equipped, the lectures are given by eminent professors, and chemical and research laboratories are attached, as well as a museum and a library containing over ten thousand volumes. In Edinburgh also a museum and a library have been established at 36 York Place. Medals and scholarships are yearly competed for, and altogether the apprentice chemist has every inducement to prosecute his studies. The diploma and other examinations are open to women equally with men.

We may now take leave of the Pharmaceutical Society, and turn to consider the diplomas of the Institute of Chemistry of Great Britain and Ireland. This society was founded in 1877, and incorporated by royal charter in 1885. Its objects are to promote the better education of persons desirous of qualifying themselves to be public and technical analysts and chemical advisers on scientific subjects, to examine candidates and to grant certificates of competency, and to elevate the profession of consulting and analytical chemistry by setting up a high standard of scientific and practical efficiency, and by requiring on the part of its members the observance of strict rules in regard to professional conduct. This last object is gained by the certificates granted by the institute being renewed every year. Public analysts, professional chemists in works, and analytical and consulting chemists in general are among its members, and, indeed, it may be said that the best situations obtainable in the profession are held by its diploma-holders.

The diplomas granted are Associate (A.I.C.) and Fellow (F.I.C.). No person is qualified to become an Associate until he has attained the age of twenty-one years, and unless he has passed through a course of at least three years' study of theoretical and analytical chemistry, physics, and elementary mathematics, and has passed such examinations in the several subjects as are prescribed by the council of the institute. In order to become eligible for the fellowship an Associate is required to have been continuously engaged for a further term of three years in the study and practical work of applied chemistry.

At present there are three examinations for the associateship. The first is that required to be passed by medical students prior to registration, or its equivalent. Then study may be prosecuted for three years at any university or approved college. Those who become 'students' of the institute require only two years at such classes; but they must in addition have been engaged for two years in the laboratory of a Fellow. The second examination is in theoretical and practical chemistry, the practical tests occupying about four days. Those who hold a B.A. or B.Sc. degree of a university with honours in chemistry are not required to undergo this examination. The fee is two guineas.

The final, for which a fee of three guineas is required, is a thorough test in analytical chemistry.

The candidate may select one of the following divisions of the subject: (1) mineral analysis; (2) analysis and assay of metals, especially alloys; (3) gas analysis; (4) organic analysis, including combustions; (5) analysis of food, water, and drugs. Success here earns the diploma A.I.C.

An entrance fee of four guineas is charged for the fellowship. We have already stated how an Associate may obtain the higher diploma; candidates who have not been Associates may be required to pass one or more examinations. In those cases where they have not received systematic instruction in physics, the council may require evidence of sufficient knowledge in the subjects of light, heat, magnetism, and electricity by graduation in science at a university. We hope to have sufficiently stated the leading lines while omitting the details, for we wish to show that the diploma F.I.C. is a most desirable one. It

indicates not only sound scientific training, but much practical experience and general trustworthiness in all that relates to the practice of the profession. As a consequence it possesses a very considerable value.

We would add a final warning to the aspirant. Everywhere around us are the signs of advancement, and examinations are yearly growing harder and competition more keen. Anything worth striving for can only be got by determination, energy, and systematic work. There must be no impatience at the slowness with which success comes, for the success which remains and is satisfying is usually the result of, it may be, years upon years of plodding. Our ultimate happiness is the final reward of the exercise of self-denial and of the cultivation of moral strength, which, indeed, gives intellectual vigour and physical well-being.

A WEST INDIAN HONEYMOON.

By MAJOR T. PRESTON BATTERSBY.



WHAT sort of a place is Santos, captain?' I asked, partly because I really wanted to know, but partly also because the cabin of the steamer was stuffy and cockroachy, and the sea rather rough, and I had just been served with a liberal plateful of hot plum-pudding with cream sauce, which in the tropics is a dish that requires reflection.

'Santos!' said the long-limbed Yankee captain, with a humorous side-glance at my untouched plate, which showed he quite understood the situation. 'Santos, sir, is hell upon earth when Yellow Jack is abroad, and not much better when he isn't.'

'How so?' asked I, motioning furtively to the steward to remove my plate, and shifting my chair a little so as to get the benefit of the trade-wind through the open port. I was on board a little tramp steamer, making the trip from Barbadoes to St Lucia, at which latter island I had a few hours' inspection-duty to fulfil, which would have entailed a wait of a fortnight had I gone by the regular mail.

'Well, sir, it's this way. First and foremost, it's a big port and hundreds of ships put into it. It is a hot, dirty, damp, unhealthy place, with fifteen thousand inhabitants. And the fools have only built two wharves to load and unload at; you must take your turn. Eight months I have known a barque lie at anchor in the harbour waiting her chance.'

My face must have expressed incredulity, for my nautical friend here stopped his story to remark, 'I guess you don't believe me, stranger.

Steward, bring the officer another help of pudding.'

I assured him that I believed him implicitly, and, indeed, I found afterwards that the information he had given me was perfectly correct. I also declined the pudding, and begged him to continue, which he did after smiling a grim smile.

'I was there in 1891; we put in on our way to New York. I thought there would be a good chance of picking up a few passengers whilst the fever was on, and so I did; but we paid dear for it. You see, they had cholera there that year, as well as Yellow Jack, and the harbour was full of ships that couldn't get away, because they had no officers left to navigate them and no crews to man them. Seventy-nine captains and six or seven hundred sailors had died when I got there, and I calculate many a naval action wouldn't have cost as much. I'm not easily frightened myself, but I can tell you I thought it was time to go when I went ashore one evening after dark, and the first thing I did was to trip up over a body lying across the street, and fall with my face right in the waistcoat of another gentleman who had just died where he lay of Yellow Jack. The one I tripped over had died of cholera, as I could see when my mate brought up the lantern!'

I stared at him in amazement, but the man was quite serious; he did not seem to think that he was narrating anything at all unusual. From what I have since heard of Santos, I do not suppose he was.

'Well, sir, my first mate was with me, and he

said he felt sick, and went and got some rum to keep his pecker up. It is a bad thing to drink rum in Santos. Next morning he and six of our passengers were dead. I wanted to bury them decently on shore or in the harbour; but the fools that called themselves the government wouldn't allow it—as if one dead body more or less mattered then; so I made the engineer get up steam, and we sewed the corpses up in sail-cloth, with plenty of scrap-iron, and lashed them out over the gunwales, and so we went out to sea. The niggers we passed in the fishing-boats howled that we were a death-ship.'

'I should think you were!' said I.

'We were afterwards. When we got a mile or so from land I read a few prayers, the best I could think of, and then a man went round and cut the lashings, and we laid our course for New York; but you bet we had a time of it before we got there. We took the fever with us, and we had no doctor on board; and it would not have mattered much if we had had. The crew went mad one after the other. It began with the firemen; they dropped down dead with the shovels in their hands. Then one man with the fever on him jumped overboard to get out of his misery. After that they all did. I put some of them in irons when they tried it, but they just died raging mad in a few hours, so I gave it up. We only landed one man at New York, out of all the passengers we took on board at Santos, and but for fine weather we would never have reached port at all, we were so short-handed. Once we got out of the tropics we lost no more, though.' He thoughtfully expectorated into a spittoon at his feet, and I found it advisable to go on deck, whither he soon followed me.

Carlisle Bay, with its shipping, and the low hills of Barbadoes were fast disappearing behind us as the little tramp, with the strong trade-wind behind her, plunged ahead through the sparkling waves, blue tourmaline colour in their depths, shading off to the green of an aquamarine where their tops grew thin and transparent. Our bows were pointed straight towards the setting sun, and a black cloud of smoke poured from the funnel, showing that the engineer was firing up. He had dined with us, and I wondered what he felt like in the engine-room, and how a temperature of one hundred degrees or so would agree with that cream sauce.

'We will be off Castries about four o'clock to-morrow morning,' said the captain. 'I am not going to stop there. The harbour-master will take you ashore in his boat, but you will not find it easy to pass away the time till daylight. Your folks are all up on the Morne Fortunée, and you can't get up there in the dark. There is a sort of hotel in Castries where you might be able to knock somebody up, but I doubt it.'

'Oh, never mind,' said I; 'I can rough it. It will not be like Santos anyhow.'

'You're right there, sir. I've seen curious things happen in these waters too. I dare say, now, you have been on Pelican Island?'

'The quarantine station?' said I. 'Oh yes, I have seen it. Uninteresting little place it is, too.'

'Well now, I'll tell you a story about that, that I'll venture to say you have never heard before. It happened years ago, and I do not think there ever were many who knew the rights of it. Light your pipe if you like, sir. No! Well, maybe you're right. I should not feel I had had my dinner if I didn't get a smoke after it.'

'There was a young fellow who came out to Barbadoes to take a post as manager in one of the firms that trade in Bridgetown. They promised him a good salary, for he belonged to their London house, and I suppose he was a smart business man. He knew he would have a lonely time of it out here, and he could well afford a wife, so he brought one out with him—a little English girl. I have heard from those who saw her that she was real fond of him and he of her, and they were wonderfully taken with the strangeness and the newness of everything they saw. You see, when one first comes out to the tropics one's health is good, and you have the cold climate's energy in you, and if you do not take an interest in things then—why, you never will.'

'Now, about that time a barque had come in from Santos, forty-three days out, with a clean bill of health for the voyage, and so she had not been quarantined. When they began to unload the ballast to fill up with sugar, one of the men fell ill, and then another; so the captain took them up to the town hospital, and there they died of yellow fever, and were buried in a great hurry, and nothing said about it, for fear people should be frightened.'

'The health officer went on board the barque, and he soon found what was the matter. The ballast was all Santos earth—full of fever no doubt. He had the hatches of the hold battened down and sealed, and then he telegraphed to the owners asking for power to hire a schooner and put the well men on board of her, whilst the barque was taken out to sea and the ballast jettisoned. But the owners sent word back that it was no business of theirs, and the colony might do what it liked; they had no money to waste in hiring schooners because a lot of sailors were afraid of yellow fever.'

'By this time a lot of the men were ill, so the government bought a couple of marquees from the military and pitched them on Pelican Island—one for the sick men and one for the well ones; and they sent a doctor to live with them, and to see that no one left the island to carry the infection elsewhere.'

'Now, the whole matter being kept very dark, as I said before, and this young man and his wife being only just landed, and their heads full

of each other and of the wonderful things around them, it is easy enough to see that they would scarcely hear of what was going on; and one evening nothing would suit the pair but to hire a boat and go sailing in Carlisle Bay to get away from the mosquitoes on shore; for, as they were new-comers, the mosquitoes plagued them greatly, as I dare say they did you, sir, when you first came out.

'Well, the silly couple started for their sail, and he took a revolver to shoot sharks with—though he might as well have taken a popgun—not to mention that there are no sharks in Carlisle Bay now; they are frightened of the steamers.

'After they had sailed about for a while, as ill-luck would have it, the girl saw the white tents on Pelican Island, and nothing would do for her but to go and explore it, and see who was having a picnic there. And the poor young fellow knew no better than to take her at her word. He was London bred, and I don't suppose had ever heard of quarantine in his life.

'They tied their boat up to the pier, and the first the doctor knew of their being in the island was when he saw them standing inside the door of the marquee where he was helping the nigger attendant to lay out a seaman who had just died of the fever, whilst two other poor chaps who had an hour or so longer to live looked on.

'Well, sir, you may imagine the doctor was angry. He jumped up and pushed them both out of the tent, and then he got hold of the young manager and shook him, and asked him what he meant by bringing a young woman fresh from home (as he could see by her colour) to that place; and did he know it meant certain death if she took the fever? and so on, and so on. And then he told them they could not leave the island now they had got on to it, and it was his bounden duty to keep them in it. And all the time the young man never answered a word, but got whiter and whiter. At last he cried out to his wife to run down to the boat and he would follow her. She did what she was told, sadly frightened no doubt, poor thing. The doctor called out his nigger from the tent, and was for running after her, but the manager whipped out his revolver and swore a great oath that he would shoot him if he did not stop. The nigger ran away, but the doctor was a good-plucked one. "I'll die doing my duty!" he said. With that the young man put the revolver back in his pocket, and ran, at the doctor and knocked him down, and then rushed down to the boat, where his wife was, and jumped in. He cut the painter and hoisted the sail. But a lookout man on shore had seen their craft touch at the island, and by this time two white ten-oared boats were coming from

Bridgetown as fast as the men could row, to see what was the matter. They were between him and the shore, and he couldn't doubt what their object was, as they altered their course to cut him off.

'Now, sir, I won't go into details; but a man dying of yellow fever is not a pleasant sight to look at, and I make no doubt that if I had been on board that boat myself, and knew that I and my wife were likely to be brought back to Pelican Island and left there, for months maybe, I would have done as the manager did—put up my helm, slacked off the sheet, and ran away. The trade-wind was blowing strong, and he could easily outsail the oars. I suppose he thought, on that course, he was bound to make some of the islands, as they all lay to leeward.' The captain paused a while and looked over the stern at the foaming track of the screw. We were light in the water.

'Well,' asked I, 'what happened next?'

'I don't know, sir; I don't know. It is not every landsman who can steer a boat running before the trades with a following sea; perhaps she was pooped, or he may have let her broach-to. Either way she would be pretty certain to fill and sink, and I hope that was what happened. Sometimes at night, when I am on deck, I think of those two poor things in an open boat, with no food or water, and no prospects before them, even if they got safe to land—for of course he could never go back to Barbadoes. He had his revolver, you see! Next day a gunboat came into Carlisle Bay, and she was sent to look for the lost craft, but she never found her. So the few who knew the rights of the story agreed to hush it up, and most people thought the boat had been blown out of the harbour, and so swamped. After all, there was no one to blame; but it was a sad pity—a sad pity!'

The short tropical twilight was changing rapidly to the darkness of night. The captain walked forward to see that the port and starboard lights were burning properly, and I went below to try to get some sleep before reaching Castries. I saw no more of him till I said good-bye as I stepped into the harbour-master's boat in the warm, velvety blackness of the early morning. As I shook hands I asked him how he happened to know the story himself.

'I was the skipper of the barque,' he said shortly. 'I was on Pelican Island.'

Half-an-hour later, as I was fighting the mosquitoes and trying vainly to get to sleep in a chair in the odorous bar-room of the Castries hotel, I remembered several other questions that I should have liked to ask him; but I never saw him again. The little tramp steamer was sunk whilst running the blockade at Cuba with a cargo of arms and ammunition for the insurgents. I have always felt that the captain did not tell me quite the whole of that story.

RIFLING SHIPS ON THE AUSTRALIAN COAST.



SEVERAL times in each year Australian newspapers announce the departure to England or San Francisco of vessels carrying hundreds of thousands of pounds' value in gold. As much as three millions sterling are sometimes carried away from the Australian coast in a few months. In 1896 the three colonies of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria sent away £8,889,000. It is not a matter of surprise that such announcements excite the cupidity of a section of the community, or that from time to time attempts are made to surreptitiously lay hands on some portion of the seductive treasure. A century ago the means employed for the exploiting of a ship's valuables differed greatly from those in vogue now. Then pirates attacked the vessel on the high seas, and a battle royal determined the issue, or some of the ship's own men or officers conspired and fought the others for the booty. At the present day there is none of this sensational bravery. Personal prowess of the demonstrative kind is never seen, and the smoke and noise of war are wholly absent. Robbing a ship's safe on the Australian coast is now conducted with the same silent and thoughtful deliberation as is the solving of a difficult chess problem. And the success which attends this new method exemplifies from an unexpected quarter the truth of the poet's high conceit :

In silence mighty things are wrought;
Silently builded, thought on thought,
Truth's temple greets the sky;
And, like a citadel with towers,
The soul, with her concentrated powers,
Is strengthened silently.

The poet had a different object in his mind's eye, but his canons of work exactly suit the needs of the modern ship-safe rifler.

The first thing the rifler sets his heart upon is how to get the key. It is singular what negligence ship officers often display in regard to the custody of their keys. The theory, and indeed the general practice, is that the captain checks the boxes as they are stored in the bullion-room, locks the door when the transaction is complete, and, sleeping and waking, carries the key in a leather pouch around his neck till he unlocks the door at the end of the voyage. But theory and practice are often set aside. In the *Tararua* case at Melbourne in 1880, when £5000 worth of gold bars were stolen, the police discovered that two keys, either of which opened the bullion-room, used to hang against the wall in the public bar. It was also discovered that one of these keys mysteriously disappeared twelve months before the robbery, and that no serious investigation was then made into the loss;

nor was any alteration made in the lock of the bullion-room. This *Tararua* was a Union Company's boat, running between New Zealand and Australia, and had shipped boxes of gold at various ports. Altogether she was supposed to carry eleven boxes. On arriving at Melbourne it was found that one of these boxes, containing five bars, weighing 1255 oz. 12 dwt. 12 gr., and valued at over £5000, was missing. Examination showed that some one had simply opened the door with a key, extracted the box, and locked the door again. There was no clue as to when the deed was done. The fact that the twelve months' missing key had never been traced stood to the advantage of the criminal. The police record of the proceedings says: 'So many persons had the opportunity to take this gold, owing to the carelessness of those who ought to have had charge of the keys of the gold-room, that we find it most difficult to fix suspicion more firmly upon one than another.'

The robbery from the *Iberia*, which left Melbourne for London in March 1889, is supposed to have been also effected by means of a key surreptitiously procured. In that case the purloined gold consisted of five thousand sovereigns, and the robbery was not discovered till the arrival of the vessel in London. The captain, second officer, and purser were called on to resign, not on account of suspicion resting on them, but because they could give no explanation of the robbery. The mystery was never fully cleared up, but events indicate that some of the sailors had a hand in the crime.

The robbery of £5000 in gold ingots from the *Aredale* at the Nelson Wharf, New Zealand, about 1865, was undoubtedly the outcome of mislaid keys.

Bullion is carried in solid bars or ingots, generally 8 inches by 3 inches by 1 inch, and each bar is valued at £800. It often happens, particularly along the coast of Australia, that the captain has to add to his consignments at port after port, and thus necessarily locks and unlocks the bullion-room door many times. When it is discovered at the London side that a robbery has taken place, the fact stated greatly extends the area of investigation. The surroundings on each occasion of locking and unlocking must be minutely examined, and all suspected persons carefully looked up and shadowed. Interested parties, or individuals with a taste for practical jokes, increase the difficulties of elucidation by showering the police with anonymous revelations as to the whereabouts of the missing treasure. At a critical stage of the *Tararua* investigations the detectives received a letter running thus: '... Bars. Search butcher's shop, — Street, Melbourne; also dwelling-house for a prospect. Night.' The butcher's shop and dwelling-house were duly raided at night, but no

gold bars were forthcoming. Another anonymous letter ran: 'What about — and a certain cabman? They know something of the *Tatarua* gold.' Here again the clue ended in nothing. Detectives wisely give a certain amount of attention to anonymous letters; but there is no doubt that such letters are often written to throw justice off the scent.

The robbery from the *China* developed in a remarkable way. Here the Oriental Bank in Sydney placed the gold on board a coastal steamer called the *Avoca*. At Melbourne the gold was transhipped to the *China*. The *China* touched at Adelaide and other ports, but it was only at Galle the discovery of the robbery was made. Detectives operated on all the ports simultaneously, but nowhere could a clue be found. The amount missing was the usual £5000. The P. & O. Company, to whom the *China* belonged, dismissed various officers, and after a time the subject dropped out of public talk. In 1878, however, a man named Weiberg, who had been carpenter on the *China*, took up a selection in the interior of Victoria. Before settling down he married a Melbourne barnmaid, and appears to have confided to her some shady particulars of his past history. The Samson and Delilah story was in part repeated, and the public laid themselves out to watch Weiberg. The upshot was the arrest of the man as the safe-rifler of the *China*. In his effects lay ready proof of his guilt. One thousand sovereigns were found in a tin of fat stored away by him in Melbourne. In his hut was discovered a wooden plane stuffed with gold; the wood was hollowed out and the gold dropped in. In the hut was also discovered a bar of soap containing two hundred sovereigns. A policeman happened to lift the soap, when its great weight arrested his attention. With an auger the soap had been drawn out and the sovereigns inserted in its stead. Weiberg was a man of resource who declined to accept defeat. He told the detectives that he had eighteen hundred sovereigns concealed on his selection, and offered, if they accompanied him, to point out the spot where the booty lay. As may be surmised, he fooled the police into a wild, thick-timbered region, took them suddenly off guard, and made his escape. He was recaptured, however, some months later, and after doing a term of hard labour was accidentally drowned in a Gippsland lake.

The mystery of the *Iberia* £5000 was cleared up in a still more singular manner. Every attempt to trace the lost money failed, and the authorities ceased to think about it. One day two boys playing at Williamstown saw a mouse run into a hole under the platform of the railway pier. One of the boys started to dig the mouse out with a stick, and, to his surprise, unearthed a mass of sovereigns. The boys gathered up between them two hundred and eighty-two

sovereigns, and hurried home to report their luck. The police were informed, and before the day was out three thousand seven hundred and forty-two sovereigns were recovered. This still left a balance, but neither balance nor robber has since turned up.

The recovery of the *Aredale* gold was more satisfactory, as far as amount is concerned. This robbery was, as has been said, effected by some one who made use of unguarded keys. It took place in the early sixties, and covered the usual £5000, but in bars. For nearly two years the police laboured in vain. The mystery might never have been cleared up but for an accident. A wharf-lumper fishing at Nelson Pier, where the *Aredale* had been berthed, hooked on to something which excited his curiosity. Obtaining assistance, the lumper succeeded in bringing to the surface the missing box with its treasure intact. The robber had evidently sunk the box, intending to return for it when opportunity permitted.

Less than a year ago the *Oceana* lost £5000 at or near Melbourne, but investigation has so far failed to unravel the mystery.

HOME SICK.

WRITE to me very often,
And I greatly long to hear;
For alien hearts are round me,
And alien faces near.

Write when the sun is sinking,
And the firelight flecks the gloom,
And the mist dims all the window,
And the shadows shroud the room.

Write when the songs that we sang
From other voices come,
When the old, old strains awaken
The thoughts that have long been dumb.

Write to me very often;
For, in times of thoughtful pain,
I dream that I do what we did
Over and over again.

Write from the cheerless city
In autumn's evening-damps,
When the splashing pavements glimmer
With the rain-bespattered lamps.

Write from the happy country,
With its grass-grown hills and sun,
Where under the moss-hung boulders
The musical rivulets run.

Write to me very often,
For I often think of you;
And the life I lead is lonely,
And the friends I find are few.